



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Playground Improvement Programme
<b>Date:</b>	11 August 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Paul Barr, Landscape Planning & Development Manager

<b>1</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
.	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee regarding the playground improvement programme for 2011/12 and to seek approval to carry out a refurbishment programme based on a selection of sites in most need of improvement as identified in the independent playground inspection report

<b>2</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
	<p>The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 10 June 2010 it received a report on the playground improvement programme. The Committee agreed that refurbishment be carried out in respect of playgrounds at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alexandra Park (Lower);</li><li>• Alloa street;</li><li>• Horn Drive;</li><li>• Springhill Park; and</li><li>• Willowbank.</li></ul> <p>It is further reminded that at its meeting on 12 August 2010 it subsequently agreed to also include play areas at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carrick Hill; and</li><li>• Tyndale</li></ul> <p>At its meeting of 12th August 2010 it was reported that subject to funding playground refurbishment would be carried out at Alderman Tommy Patten, Alexandra Park (Upper) and Glencairn as part of the refurbishment programme for 2012/13.</p>

	<p>The Inspection Process for Belfast City Council playgrounds which prioritises playgrounds for refurbishment has been reviewed and updated with some improvements to more accurately reflect the condition and effectiveness of each playground and its equipment. A tender for the supply of play equipment is now in place which will help to expedite the refurbishment works more effectively.</p> <p>The Inspections contract was carried out as usual by an independent consultancy in June. From this report a programme of work compiled for a range of refurbishment work from replacement of items of equipment to complete refurbishment of the playground. Where a playground is to be completely refurbished, consultations with local communities will be sought through the Parks Outreach Officers. Any consultation will be time bound so as not to unduly delay proposed refurbishment work.</p>
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<b>3</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p>The 2011 Annual Playground Inspection was undertaken by 'Play Services Ireland' in June of this year. Detailed reports for all 79 playgrounds have been produced which assess the quality and safety of each facility against current European standards. Inspection reports also prioritise essential repairs and identify existing equipment suitable for children with disabilities (see Appendix 1 – Typical Inspection Report).</p> <p>As part of the inspection process individual items of equipment, within each playground, were assessed and received a quality score. A mean quality score for all play equipment within each site was then derived and classified as follows (see Appendix 2 – Summary of Mean Quality Scores);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Score 0.0 – 4.9      Classified as 'Poor'</li> <li>• Score 5.0 – 7.5      Classified as 'Fair'</li> <li>• Score 7.6 – 10.0      Classified as 'Good'</li> </ul> <p>The independent inspection recorded a total of 20 playgrounds across the city with a mean quality score of less than 5.0; these sites are deemed to contain equipment in an overall 'poor' condition (see Appendix 3 – Sites Classified: Poor). In terms of this year's refurbishment budget the poorest quality playgrounds will be a focus for improvement.</p> <p>In line with this year's overall budget and the restrictive construction deadline of April 2012 the list of the 20 poorest quality playgrounds was reviewed and condensed to produce an improvement programme that is practical in terms of delivery on site. The desired outcome will be to move the following 10 sites from their current status of 'poor' to that of 'good'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glassmullin Playground</li> <li>• Finlay Park</li> <li>• Lenadoon</li> </ul>

- Alexandra Upper
- Highfield
- Marrowbone junior
- Tir na nog Ligoneil
- Tommy Patton Playground
- Knocknagoney Playground
- Grampian Avenue Playground

The following 10 sites have been omitted from this years' refurbishment programme for the following reasons;

Tynedale	refurbishment works ongoing from 2010 -2011
Dunville Park	DSD/BCC to fund development of new playground
Woodvale	DSD/BCC to fund development of new playground
Victoria Park	Sydenham Bypass widening to impact on the site
Avoniel	to be reviewed as part of Connswater Community Greenway
Ballymacarret Greenway	to be reviewed as part of Connswater Community Greenway
McCorry Park	capital investment made within last 5 years and scored well in ancillary structures
Falls	capital investment made within last 5 years and scored well in ancillary structures
N. Queen Street Cavehill	wider application for funding to improve entire facility stand alone scheme required to enhance facility and landscape setting

As part of the 2011 inspection process ancillary structures e.g. seats, bins, fencing, signage within each playground were also assessed and given a mean quality score. Playgrounds with ancillary structures that have a mean quality score of less than 5.0 are classified as being in an overall 'poor' state of repair. Of the ten selected playgrounds for improvement the following will require total refurbishment to include replacement of all play equipment, surfacing and ancillary structures (see Appendix 4 – Playground Refurbishments 2011-2012);

- Finlay Park
- Alexandra Upper
- Marrowbone Junior
- Highfield
- Glassmullin

In order to encourage greater community ownership of playgrounds undergoing total refurbishment it will be necessary to undertake consultation with local communities on the planning and design of new facilities. It is envisaged that this consultation process will be managed by our Parks Outreach Officers in partnership with officers from the Landscape Planning & Development Unit.

	<p>Of the remaining five sites selected quality scores for ancillary facilities were classified as either 'good' or 'fair'. Therefore, in terms of refurbishment, items of existing play equipment only must be replaced at the following sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lenadoon</li> <li>• Tir na nog Ligoneil</li> <li>• Tommy Patton Playground</li> <li>• Grampian Avenue</li> <li>• Knocknagoney</li> </ul>
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<b>4</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p><u>Financial</u> All refurbishment work will be funded through the Playground Refurbishment Budget which currently stands at £649,200.00 for the current year with any additional funding from external sources if available and appropriate.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Delivery will be managed by the Landscape Planning and Development Unit within existing resources.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> The desired outcome will be to move the following 10 sites from their current status of 'poor' to that of 'good'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glassmullin Playground</li> <li>• Finlay Park</li> <li>• Lenadoon</li> <li>• Alexandra Upper</li> <li>• Highfield</li> <li>• Marrowbone junior</li> <li>• Tir na nog Ligoneil</li> <li>• Tommy Patton Playground</li> <li>• Grampian Avenue</li> <li>• Knocknagoney</li> </ul>

<b>5</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>

<b>6</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	It is recommended that the Committee approve the selected sites for total refurbishment and replacement items.

<b>7</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	Officer responsible: Paul Barr Actions to be completed by: Summer 2012

<b>8</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	None

<b>9</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – Typical Inspection Report Appendix 2 – Summary of Mean Quality Scores Appendix 3 – Sites Classified: Poor Appendix 4 – Playground Refurbishments 2011-2012